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ABSTRACT

The May, 1974, bulletin issued by the Civil Service Commission deals with job restructuring, the process of realigning job duties to develop technician-type or "bridge" jobs in Federal agencies, as a means to provide upward mobility for employees. Besides being highly beneficial to employees in dead end jobs at low grade levels, job restructuring planning can tie in with broader organizational concerns and become a continuous process built into the personnel system. Job restructuring consists of six elements: (1) task statements of work, (2) job descriptions of bridge positions, (3) qualification requirements, (4) selection methods, (5) training plan, and (6) training agreement with the Civil Service Commission. Some obstacles to job restructuring for upward mobility are related to a lack of full management commitment, management practices incompatible with upward mobility goals, attitudes toward minorities and women, misconceptions of job restructuring and upward mobility, and credentialism and professionalism unrelated to job duties. (Author/EA)

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upward mobility through job restructuring

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Personnel Management Series No. 26

UPWARD MOBILITY THROUGH JOB RESTRUCTURING

May 1974

United States Civil Service Commission

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PREFACE

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY wears more faces than those we conventionally accept. It covers more than race or sex, more than creed or religion, more than national origin. It includes, said President Richard Nixon, in a memorandum to agency heads on August 8, 1969, the opportunity for people "to seek and to achieve their highest potential and productivity in employment situations."

With these words the President opened the door to advancement for many employees who might otherwise spend their entire Federal service on the bottom rungs of the career ladder. Agency efforts to provide employees with the opportunity to move up to better-paying, more satisfying jobs—the upward mobility concept—were given greater impetus than ever before.

There are, however, inherent roadblocks to upward mobility. For instance, many employees are in jobs with grades that top out at GS-5 to GS-9. Even more importantly, these jobs may fail to provide the experience that would permit a crossover to other occupational lines with higher-grade duties. The result is a gap between the minimally skilled occupational ladders and the skilled, professional[1]-technical-administrative ladders. Jumping this gap is rarely possible through skills training alone. A different approach is needed to span the gap. That approach is job restructuring—the process of realigning job duties to develop technician-type or "bridge" jobs in Federal agencies.

To test the feasibility of the bridge-job concept, the Civil Service Commission, supported by funds from the Department of Labor, initiated a project in an agency setting to apply job restructuring as a means of facilitating upward mobility. Participating in the project were two Department of Health, Education, and Welfare agencies: the Social Rehabilitation Service and the Audit Agency. Major emphasis in both agencies was on developing opportunities for

[1] In the Federal service, professional occupations are those which require for their performance the knowledges and abilities usually associated with a bachelor's or higher degree in a specialized academic field such as medicine, mathematics, psychology, engineering. For such occupations, Federal qualifications standards typically prescribe a minimum amount of formal academic courses in the specialized field.

The two-grade interval occupations include not only these professional occupations, but also a variety of administrative and technical occupations. These latter, like the professional occupations are characterized by the full range of levels of difficulty and responsibility, and cover grades from GS-5 to GS-18. However, the knowledges and abilities required to perform them successfully are not necessarily tied to higher education. This makes them excellent candidates as target positions for upward mobility programs, and the discussion which follows deals primarily with these administrative and technical positions.

employees in dead end jobs to cross over to positions in the fields of Social Science Analyst, Budget Analyst, and Management (Auditor) Analyst.

The end products, the nuts and bolts that went into the construction of the programs, appear in a companion report: *Upward Mobility Through Job Restructuring. Volume I. Building Career Programs in the Federal Service With Materials Developed by the Application of Job Restructuring*, PB-211 711, April 1972. Copies may be ordered directly from the National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Va. 22151.

INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT IS JOB RESTRUCTURING?

A Definition. Job restructuring, sometimes called job engineering or job design, is the rearrangement of the way work gets done in an organization. No matter how labeled, it means setting up a different pattern of positions in which essentially the same amount of work gets done. How the restructuring is done and how the pattern of the new work arrangement varies, depends on the goal to be achieved.

Technically, any rearrangement of tasks can be called job restructuring. But in order that the work involved really be worth the effort, we should view it in terms of—

a. *The organization*: Is this work that needs to be done? Will it affect a significant number of employees? Does it provide full-range career ladders? Is it broadly systematic, i.e., is it derived from an examination of work in terms of the overall agency goals?

b. *The employee*: Do these tasks make up a meaningful job? What are the opportunities for growth in the job?

These are some of the questions we need to consider before launching a job restructuring project.

Clearing Up Misconceptions. There are many things which job restructuring is *not*. One of the most common assumptions is that job restructuring and upward mobility mean the same thing. They do not, although the two terms are often used interchangeably. Job restructuring is a method, a technique, for reaching a desired result or results. Job restructuring in itself is neither desirable nor undesirable; what gives the method meaning is its appropriateness to the objective already decided upon. Upward mobility is a goal in itself. It may be achieved (or partially achieved) by using the technique of job restructuring—or by using other methods or combinations of methods, but to equate job restructuring with upward mobility is to confuse means with ends. Also commonly confused with the method or technique of job restructuring are goals such as career development and job enrichment, which can be achieved with or without reorganizing work.

Job dilution, the shredding out of very simple tasks, such as in creating a teacher aide job, is job restructuring in a very limited sense in that it deals only with entry-level positions and does not consider the organization as a system. Job restructuring without career development may meet an organizational objective, such as cutting unit production costs in industry or providing entry jobs, but is self-defeating as a basis for upward mobility programs.

Rewriting job descriptions is definitely not job restructuring. Job descriptions are end products. They should no more be equated with the jobs themselves than the blueprint should be considered the same as the building. Jobs are not restructured unless actual people are performing new arrangements of work.

2. WHY RESTRUCTURE?

Some Possible Benefits. Traditionally, government jobs have been split among three rather poorly connected levels. There are gaps between the low, middle, and high-level jobs which are extremely difficult to hurdle—the gap between low and middle is really more like a chasm. People do leap over the gaps, of course. But, for many, especially those moving from low to middle, the moves are piecemeal rather than planned as an integral part of the personnel system. They are usually achieved only by dint of great personal effort. Job restructuring can facilitate upward mobility by building bridge jobs which will lead naturally over these gaps. Bridging provides a way up and out for many of the large numbers of employees now in dead end jobs at low grade levels. The optimum result is a full-range career ladder, or sets of ladders and lattices, arranged so that no structural barrier would keep an employee from career advancement. The sole limiting factors would be ability and motivation. Planned career paths can then be mapped out clearly to the employees—thereby reducing rumors, "gripe" sessions, accusations of preferential treatment, "pie-in-the-sky" expectations, and general mutual misunderstandings.

Job restructuring for upward mobility also frees more entry-level slots for those with few or no skills as dead-ended employees move from dead end jobs to higher positions. A good example of this is the system used in a hypothetical government department. An employee hired as a GS-2 messenger, in a short time (6-12 months) becomes, with some training, a budget clerk, performing mainly clerical duties plus a few simple technician tasks as he gains proficiency. Bit by bit, more technical duties are added and more of the routine clerical duties are dropped. If it is clear that he can handle more complex duties, he rises to budget technician, again with more demanding tasks added as he learns the job. From there on, the department's budget shop provides for a crossover from technician to the professional ranks of the budget analyst. In the meantime, new messengers are hired, move up as the budget clerks become technicians, and so on, the cycle being maintained in a planned, systematic manner.

Clearly, job restructuring for upward mobility can be highly beneficial from the employees' point of view. But what benefits can management expect from job restructuring so that the managers' jobs are made easier and the agency's mission better fulfilled? We hope that the effects of job restructuring for upward mobility, the increased opportunities for advancement, for identification, development, and utilization of potentials and skills, and the knowledge of how far an employee can expect to go and what he can do to get there, will increase his job satisfaction and effectiveness.

Job restructuring, for any objective, can improve employee performance and morale in another way. Far too many professionals in government have to perform, along with their professional duties, a sizable number of supportive tasks. Task analysis pinpoints these lower-level duties and gives some clue to the extent to which they encroach on professional work (e.g., minimally, moderately, extensively). If there are enough of these duties they can then be eliminated from the professional jobs and recombined to make one or more paraprofessional jobs. (NOTE: Supportive duties are not necessarily routine clerical duties although they are less complex than those associated with regular professional work.) This frees the professional to spend his full time on the job he is supposed to perform, while assuring that supportive duties that need to be done are done. The professional is then able to assume additional duties and explore new areas for which there was never enough time. In addition, the establishment of paraprofessional jobs helps management by providing a testing and development ground for possible future professionals. Conceivably, an organization or unit would be able to "grow its own" professionals and have a planned supply of well-trained, competent workers, since an employee's performance in the paraprofessional job would be an indication of his growth potential. Also, paraprofessionals drawn from agency ranks are already familiar with the organization, thus saving orientation time and perhaps costly errors.

Job restructuring can easily tie in with the broader concerns of management. A decision to undertake a large-scale restructuring project requires managers to look at the agency as a system, at its parts as subsystems, and at the way in which the parts relate functionally and organizationally to each and to the whole. By looking at the agency in this fashion, managers can see the need for planning ahead, for systematic rather than piecemeal management. The efforts needed for good job restructuring provide greater insight into the organizational system, into the tasks that go into making up the job structure, and make for greater precision in analyzing and understanding the workflow and how it relates to goals. This, in turn, can help the manager anticipate problems and plan for contingencies, rather than wait for a problem to appear.

Whatever the purpose of restructuring, it should provide a rational ordering of work from the point of view of the needs of the organization. One valuable side effect of trying to achieve this rational system through restructuring is a healthy reexamination of old assumptions and patterns. Managers may wish to consider innovations in kinds of organization, such as moving from a hierarchical structure to "flat" structures, which are team-type organizations where people tend to work together as peers. They may also wish to examine the question of credentials and professionalism: Are the credentials traditionally required in an occupation really necessary to do the job? Are employees with these credentials generally overqualified? Do the employees identify with their profession rather than with the organization? Is professional mystique substituted for performance? Could the work be done better in a

more rational way by having fewer highly qualified professionals and adding paraprofessionals and professionals less fully qualified? Such reordering of the way work gets done—and who is to do it—can increase efficiency and could, in the long run, cut costs.

Other potentially useful side effects include changes in training programs and selection procedures (items which are not part of job restructuring per se but which are part and parcel of the implementation and continued functioning of the new work arrangement). Wasted training time and funds can be largely eliminated by tailoring courses to the skills needed for current and future job needs. In this way, training for nebulous purposes ("it's developmental," "it'll help the employee to have it in his personnel folder") is avoided, as well as the overly limited "it-must-be-directly-related-to-your-present-job" approach. If older selection methods are not appropriate, new one must be developed; selection based on records of acquired skills (written tests, educational background, and the like) can be supplemented in picking the kind of employees needed for the new jobs by methods oriented toward identifying potential abilities.

Job restructuring to achieve proper job mix can pay considerable dividends by contributing toward systematic planning and operation, higher morale, better manpower utilization, smoother and more efficient operations, and, perhaps, reduced costs over the long haul. These in turn help to provide increased ability to meet organizational goals and fulfill the agency's mission. It forces the manager to examine the agency's goals and the manner in which work is organized to achieve them.

A Word of Caution. From the foregoing, it may seem that job restructuring is the cure for all woes. It is, however, far from that. While the benefits mentioned above are important, job restructuring is only one technique among many for effecting organizational change. It cannot set goals or priorities, create good managers, make everybody happy, nor turn a poorly run organization into a magnificent example of efficiency and enlightenment. Sometimes, job restructuring is not appropriate at all, as, for example, in a general services operation, where most jobs lie at the bottom of the pyramid with very few high-skill tasks assigned to the organization. These situations may require taking steps such as reorganizing units, changing hiring and promotion practices, setting up cross-bureau career paths, or other kinds of change.

In the great majority of cases, job restructuring can be used, but we can achieve far-reaching meaningful change only by using it as one device in a whole array of managerial tools and strategies. Even then, much also depends on how we use it. It can yield results only if we use it effectively, in a planned, systematic way with objectives clearly laid out in advance.

We have mentioned possible cost savings. This, it should be emphasized, is in the long run only; in the short run, greater cost is more likely. Items such as increased training, additional responsibilities of managers, and the general confusion of the shakedown period will surely add to the budget but the long-run results should more than pay for the short-run difficulties.

Also, where reorganization and organizational growth are taking place, restructuring is much easier and can be achieved at little or no cost beyond the costs inherent in the reorganization or growth.

To stay on top of change, managers need to remain flexible and to plan ahead. This includes a constant review of work to determine the need for and feasibility of redesigning jobs to meet specific objectives. A one-shot restructuring effort will sooner or later become rigid and will cease to meet agency or employee needs. Job restructuring is, therefore, a continuous process that is built into the personnel system as an ongoing function of management.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Job Restructuring, Career Systems, and Upward Mobility. In job restructuring we arrange tasks into jobs, linking low to high skill occupations (JOB RESTRUCTURING) to develope a progression training and experience (CAREER SYSTEM) which will provide opportunities for employees stymied in low-level jobs to develop and advance within and across occupational lines (UPWARD MOBILITY PROGRAM).

The career system, then, becomes the means by which we implement an upward mobility program. It must, therefore, provide both a job structure appropriate to achieving the upward mobility objectives and also the procedures to move people into and through the program. To put the program into operation we translated these requirements into specific elements:

a. *Task statements* of work performed in the occupational area representing the raw material for restructuring positions and creating the "bridge" positions

b. *Job descriptions* of bridge positions which will provide work experience to prepare the employee to perform the duties of the target position

c. *Qualification requirements* which emphasize the basic skills and abilities needed rather than specialized work experience

d. *Selection methods* compatible with merit selection principles which stress potential and motivation

e. *A training plan* to supplement the work experience for preparing the employee for the target position

f. *A training agreement* with CSC (if either required by regulation or desired by the agency) to tie together all the elements of the program into a single, integrated package

1. TASK STATEMENTS

The application of the techniques of TASK ANALYSIS results in a pool of task statements which defines and describes the work of the target occupational area. The tasks from this pool are assembled into the bridge jobs which will provide support for the target positions. The task, as defined by the U.S. Employment Service, represents "one of the distinct activities that constitute logical and necessary steps in the performance of work by the worker." For job restructuring purposes, a task should also have an output which can stand alone, or in other words, be usable by someone other than the worker who produces it. This is necessary so that the tasks can be rear-

ranged into a different configuration of work to be done by a different combination of workers.

The task statement should communicate enough information to answer the following questions:

—*What* does the worker do? (Physical and mental responses to the work situation)

—*Why* does he do it? (To accomplish what result)

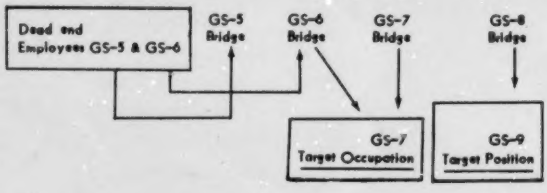
—*How* does he do it? (Methods, equipment, know-how used)

—Upon what instruction does he do it (Degree of worker discretion in doing task often specific to the particular worker-supervisor relationship and therefore less inherent in the task itself than the "what", "why", and "how" characteristics)

Scales[1] are available to define the task in terms of the work performed and the worker traits which are required to perform the task successfully. The information derived from the scales serves as a powerful aid when assembling the tasks into bridge jobs intended to help prepare the worker for the target occupation. The task statements in appendix 1 to volume I (see page iv for availability) are a sampling from major duties in three occupational areas. The tasks are drawn from the target occupation, ranging from jobs at the GS–5 entry level to jobs two or three grades above that of the target position. If the target job is at GS–9, the pool represents tasks performed at the GS–5 to the GS–12 or GS–13 levels.

2. JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR BRIDGE JOBS

A work-oriented upward mobility program provides employees with work experiences which, when supplemented by training, will equip them to perform the duties of the target position. If we direct the program at employees who are presently in dead end jobs at the GS–5 and GS–6 levels, we must establish bridge jobs to allow for lateral reassignment at these levels. We could then establish higher levels of these jobs at the grade level where the incumbent could cross over to the target occupation. We would provide levels beyond this only if the work of the support occupation warrants a full career to the higher grade levels. If the crossover is done to the GS–7 or GS–9 level, the flow of employees would appear as follows:



[1] a. *Handbook for Analyzing Jobs*, U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Administration, 1972.

b. *Introduction to Functional Job Analysis (Methods for Manpower Analysis #4)*, Fine and Wiley, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

To provide for a steady progression toward the target occupation, each succeeding grade would carry an increasing number of tasks associated with the target position so, for example, at the GS–7 and GS–8 levels, there would be considerable overlap between the duties of the support or bridge job and the duties of the target job.

There are problems associated with deciding which tasks to assign to the bridge jobs as contrasted to those tasks more appropriately allocated to the target position. At best, this is a difficult determination to make. The discussion in the Position Classifications Standards contrasting the work done by a Management Analyst, GS–343, and a Management Technician, GS–344, provides some guidelines to making this kind of determination. While the guidelines are written in terms of these two occupations, they are general enough to be applied across many administrative occupations. For bridge purposes, it is important that we keep in mind that there should be an increasing overlap in duties between the bridge and the target occupation as the grades go up. Therefore, at the higher grades we need be less concerned about which tasks go into which job.

3. CLASSIFICATION AND QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

In most instances, appropriate classification standards for the bridge jobs are printed in the *Position Classification Standards for General Schedule Positions*. If they do not exist, assistance in establishing a classification base for the bridge jobs can be obtained from the Standards Division, Bureau of Policies and Standards, or the appropriate Civil Service Commission regional office.

Qualification standards are provided in *CSC Handbook X–118*. From them we must decide whether the standards we are considering are sufficiently flexible to permit moving employees into the bridge jobs on the basis of their potential rather than on their specialized experience. If they cannot be moved on this basis then movement across occupational lines becomes extremely restricted and the purpose of an upward mobility program is defeated.

If we decide that the normal qualification standards in *Handbook X–118* do not fit the needs of the program, a training agreement (see section 6 of this chapter) would be in order. The training agreement could provide for qualification standards which would emphasize potential rather than specific experience.

The job-element approach to qualification standards facilitates the development of these standards. The approach involves the identification of the important skills, knowledges, and abilities needed to do a job. For the purposes of an upward mobility program we would place the emphasis on the skills and abilities needed rather than on content knowledges which would be supplied by the training plan for the program.

The qualification standard in *Handbook X–118* for Payroll Clerk, GS–544, provides a brief explanation and example of a job-element qualification

standard. A complete explanation of the job-element approach to the development of qualification standards can be found in *CSC Handbook X–118C, Job Qualification System for Trades and Labor Occupations.*

4. SELECTION PROCEDURES

With the qualification standards defined in terms of the essential abilities required on the job, our next task is to establish the procedures for selection within the agency's merit promotion system. We must follow the basic principle that each element included in the qualification standard is to be evaluated using *all available information.* Our assessment is based on a review of work history, education, training activities outside of jobs, supervisor's evaluations, interview appraisal, records of awards and honors received, test scores if appropriate, etc. Our objective is to assess the level of competence for each element regardless of where or how the competence was achieved.

One system which may be used for selection of candidates is described in the Payroll Clerk Standard. This system, or some alternative system, may be followed as long as it achieves the basic objective of identifying those best qualified for the position under consideration.

The use of written tests in the selection process is covered in *FPM Supplement 335–1,* Appendix A, Guidelines for Use of Written Tests. A key principle governing their use is that written tests may not be used as the *sole* means for ranking employees. Under the conditions of appendix A, we use tests as only one of the factors to be considered in making the assessment.

5. TRAINING PLAN

The essence of an upward mobility program is to equip the employee to successfully cross over from a low-skill occupation to a high-skill occupation with chances for further growth and development. The preparation to do this successfully comes from two sources:

—The work-experiences gained in the bridge jobs; and

—Training and formal schooling provided to supplement the on-the-job experience.

The total experience, work and training, must formally qualify the employee to take on the duties of the target position.

The training plan, therefore, becomes the vehicle by which the knowledges, skills, and abilities needed to function successfully in the target position are explicitly spelled out and their acquisition provided for. Since the initial selection emphasizes potential, the plan must insure that the employee is provided with the subject-matter knowledges associated with the target position.

A basic policy question which deserves our serious consideration is the extent to which the training plan should provide the credentials (usually academic) associated with the target occupational area. If the credentials do, indeed, represent learning necessary to do the job, there is no issue to resolve. But more likely there is a grey area where tradition, acceptance by colleagues,

professional contacts, etc., are made easier if the employee has the proper credentials.

Thus, even though the formal academic degree is not strictly required to do the job, relating the tasks to more complex functions may be difficult without it and the employee's chances for future success in the occupation may be limited for the lack of traditional credentials. In whatever way the problem is resolved, the training plan should recognize the advantages which could accrue to the employee if he were given a solid academic base on which to build as he progressed in his new occupation.

6. TRAINING AGREEMENTS WITH THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

One of the more useful tools in moving lower level employees out of dead end jobs or across occupations into new fields with advancement opportunities is a training agreement with the Civil Service Commission. The use of a training agreement is mandatory when training is to be substituted for some portion of the qualification requirements found in *CSC Handbook X–118*. Although many recent qualification standards provide greater flexibility in the allocation and assignment of available talent, the decision whether a formal training agreement is required is made by the agency. If there is any doubt about the necessity for an agreement, the question may be discussed with the Career Service Division, Bureau of Recruiting and Examining, or the appropriate Civil Service Commission regional or area office.

OBSTACLES TO JOB RESTRUCTURING FOR UPWARD MOBILITY

ONCE AGENCY MANAGEMENT accepts upward mobility as a goal and decides to apply job restructuring, there are still many obstacles that may arise and must be dealt with. The difficulties described here are drawn from our experiences with agencies in developing job restructuring plans. Although in many cases there is considerable overlap, the obstacles can be divided roughly into two categories—those which hinder the use of job restructuring as a technique, and those which block achieving the upward mobility goal.

1. LACK OF FULL MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT, OR "WILL"

Commitment is the capstone of any upward mobility effort. If management has the *will* to do or support such a program then most obstacles can be easily met. A firm word from the top works wonders in getting the wheels greased and working smoothly. On the other hand, if management lacks will, the tiniest obstacle becomes a major problem. In upward mobility, strong commitment is especially crucial, since this area seems to generate an unwarranted amount of fear and misconception. Reasons for the absence of will are numerous and generally fall into the following broad categories:

a. *Indifference:* Management simply may not be interested in or convinced of the effectiveness of job restructuring, or it may not see the need for providing upward mobility opportunities. Some managers may feel that the job restructuring technique is merely a useless gimmick. For any of these reasons, management may not be willing to expend the necessary effort.

b. *Insecurity:* Some managers may see proposals for job restructuring or upward mobility as a threat. It may seem to them that the very existence of such proposals implies that they have not done their job adequately. Or, they may be concerned that they will not be able to cope with any resulting organization change.

c. *Prestige:* Top officials closely associated with a particular group may oppose moving employees up through job restructuring on the grounds that it would dilute the "profession" with employees who did not undergo the same degree of training as they did and that they insist is necessary. Therefore, they oppose job restructuring when it includes career ladders leading directly into the profession. They also oppose it because it tends to be associated with selection programs which emphasize the actual requirements of the work rather than profession-determined qualifications.

Whether or not management is fully committed to the program can be determined early by the treatment accorded the restructuring group. In some cases reactions of managers may be apparent in one or a combination of these attitudes and may need to be addressed individually.

Lack of support may be manifested in various ways: The group has unusual difficulty in getting data such as staffing charts, promotions and accessions lists, or job descriptions and finds it hard to obtain suitable quarters and equipment. It has to cope with footdragging at various levels. Frequently heard are: "It's being studied," "We mustn't proceed too hastily," "There are lots of problems to be worked out first," "It's a great idea but it won't work in *my* shop," "We tried but the Civil Service Commission won't approve our plan."

Without clear support from the top, the effort is probably doomed to failure. The importance of making certain of management commitment before proceeding with an upward mobility project cannot be overemphasized. The removal of obstacles depends upon it.

2. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES INCOMPATIBLE WITH UPWARD MOBILITY GOALS

a. *Outmoded attitudes:* Some managers assume that employees are motivated to work hard and well only by the carrot and stick approach. In other words, employees must be managed by manipulating and controlling them through a system of sanctions and rewards. They fail to see employees as having striving, growth-oriented goals of their own.

b. *Traditionalism and resistance to change:* Some managers feel that "the way it has always been done" is of necessity the best way. This may include the neglect of planning and forecasting, failure to make good utilization of manpower, failure to determine employee skills and potential, failure to set up good training programs and a failure to provide a stimulating work environment. A corollary of this is what is referred to as the firefighting style of management whereby managers grasp at temporary palliatives to meet each crisis as it comes up. Another common manifestation of this traditionalism is management's overly cautious use of regulations. It tends to find in them barriers to action rather than using the flexibilities in the Federal personnel system which permit them to carry out innovative type programs.

Such limited attitudes, practices, and views of regulations pose particular problems both for job restructuring and for upward mobility. It takes considerable effort to sell their merits to this kind of manager. He or she should be made to recognize the employee's need for growth on the job, the need for an opportunity to advance to (or at least try a hand at) work with greater responsibilities—the core of job restructuring for upward mobility.

c. *Desire to retain quality employees in-place:* It is not hard to understand why a supervisor would be loath to give up a topnotch secretary or clerical worker even though it blocks the employee's development. Not only does

the supervisor hesitate to lose an employee, but he feels additionally burdened by having to train successors. Whether or not this practice is conducive to efficient management, it is clearly an obstacle to upward mobility.

d. *Empire building:* This phenomenon, often a major barrier to job restructuring, can be found not only in the ranks of top management but also at the level of the first-line supervisor. Two prominent features of one type of empire building are unwarranted grade escalation and inefficient work organization. A hallmark of this situation is a structure in which professionals are not being utilized at their full level, in which there are deputies of assistants not required by the work (layering), and in which the staff assumes tasks beyond the bounds of the work the unit is supposed to do—often overlapping or duplicating another unit's work. Such a work structure is hard to redesign without hurting someone and the mere suggestion of it often, for obvious reasons, inspires fear and hostility.

3. ATTITUDES TOWARD MINORITIES AND WOMEN

Statistical data indicates that in spite of recent impressive gains by minorities and women in obtaining employment at the middle and higher grade levels, there still are substantial numbers remaining in low level jobs without being provided opportunities to develop or acquire skills to enable them to compete for more responsible positions. Frequently this appears to be the result of oversight and in some cases perhaps even apathy or an unconscious feeling that moving minorities or women might lower the standards or quality of work being done. Such feelings are usually not expressed in words, but surface in the fear of overemphasis on credentials, reluctance to use experience-based measures to supplement a heavy reliance on written tests, reluctance to experiment with restructuring jobs to provide career ladders or paraprofessional positions, and excuses concerning tight ceilings and labor market conditions. Managers and personnel officials should review their opportunities for women and minorities to assure that they are systematically provided opportunities along with other employees to develop and utilize their potential and to compete for more responsible assignments.

4. MISCONCEPTIONS OF JOB RESTRUCTURING AND UPWARD MOBILITY

Job restructuring teams may need to clear up a variety of misconceptions about the job restructuring technique. The most prevalent are those centering around the meaning of job restructuring:

a. *Confusion of job restructuring and upward mobility:* Many equate the two (see discussion, *Why Restructure?* in the introduction to this pamphlet).

b. *Confusion of job restructuring and upgrading:* Many think that getting their secretaries upgraded by adding a few routine administrative duties to their jobs is restructuring and upward mobility to boot. But manipulating the classification system to squeeze out an extra grade is not job restructuring and it is certainly not upward mobility since it does not lead anywhere.

c. *Unfounded fears and expectations:* Because of misunderstandings of what job restructuring is some people often feel threatened. Others have unrealistic expectations of what problems job restructuring can solve and what it was never meant to solve. On the one hand, many employees show considerable job insecurity: They fear that "being restructured" means losing their jobs, being downgraded or losing status and prerogatives. On the other hand, some managers think (or hope) that job restructuring can solve all of their organizational problems, especially getting permanent slots above current ceilings. The ensuing disabusement may lead to loss of interest in the program.

d. *Interpreting bridge/technician positions as being clerical in nature:* Many staff members are unclear about what a bridge job is or of what technician duties consist. They tend to assume that an incumbent would be a type of glorified clerk, with duties such as maintaining and updating files, mailing materials, recordkeeping, and general paper-work mechanics. In other words, they see the bridge job as a means to pass off to others the more tedious parts of their jobs rather than the means for another employee to acquire, through work experience, the background needed to move into the target position.

5. CREDENTIALISM AND PROFESSIONALISM UNRELATED TO JOB DUTIES

This problem, referred to in the introduction, is one of the most pervasive and thorny issues facing the restructurer, and is a barrier to both technique and goal. In some occupations, it can be clearly shown that special credentials (medical degree, teaching license, engineering degree, etc.) are necessary to protect society and the individual. In others, education may be a good way to gain the necessary knowledges and skills, but not necessarily the only way. Often the demand for credentials has escalated beyond the point needed to ensure competence. Overemphasis on college degrees can be a barrier to restructuring jobs. There are those who feel that a degree(s) is necessary for certain occupations and will resist any possibility of creating bridge/technician jobs which may provide the type of learning situations which will aid employees in qualifying for entry to the occupations. Many still interpret upward mobility as sending employees to school to get their credentials, rather than considering such techniques as job restructuring to accomplish this. Intimately related to overemphasis on credentials is the problem of professionalism. Again, a certain amount of this quality (professionalism) is healthy if it is intended to ensure high standards of performance. However, there are work situations in which professionalism, or more specifically, professional mystique, moves, through such means as imposing artificially high requirements, to control entry into the occupation. An exaggerated form of professionalism will present difficulties for the same reason as credentialism —it makes for only one acceptable (and very narrow) route into the occu-

pation. Proposals that suggest a change in this route, such as through bridge-type jobs, will very likely earn the proposer some headaches.

6. MINUSCULE ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

Sometimes small units occur naturally in the work structure; they may also come about in order to support higher grade levels. Sometimes they are the result of poor planning. Small organizational units, such as those with three or four higher level jobs and some clerical support cannot be restructured. There are simply not enough positions to work with.

7. DEAD END JOBS AT INTERMEDIATE LEVELS

Frequently, employees in technician/subprofessional jobs have no way of bridging into the higher level ladders without fistfuls of credentials. Such truncated job ladders occur because of credentialism, preconceived notions about nonprofessionals ("once a technician, always a technician") and to the structure of the jobs themselves. The tasks may have been arranged in such a way that the jobs offer no development or offer work which is qualifying only for promotions in the technician series and not for the higher level series.

8. LOW-LEVEL WORK AT HIGH GRADES

Occasionally units may be found where the incumbents of highly graded positions are performing chiefly clerical or other low-level duties. If much of that exists, restructuring for upward mobility purposes is impossible without some drastic prior reorganization.

9. HEADQUARTERS OFFICES

Restructuring jobs in the headquarters of an agency is more difficult than in the field or in the operational sectors. The principal activities of an agency's headquarters are setting policy and developing programs. This means that most jobs are at relatively high grade levels and that most of them are filled by people with program experience. This makes it hard to sort out enough tasks that are appropriate to bridge/technician positions in terms of both duties and grade level. It can be done, but some ingenuity is required of the restructurer in order to come up with viable recommendations.

10. CEILINGS

As we mentioned before, ceilings are a hard reality that managers have to live with and that the restructurer has to take into account. However, it need not be an absolute barrier; job restructuring for upward mobility can be done within current ceiling limitations if imaginative use is made of ceiling allocations, turnover, and budgetary techniques.

ARE THERE ANY SOLUTIONS?

MANY OF the aforementioned obstacles to job restructuring can be overcome or minimized. The following is intended as an aid to the restructurer so that he may avoid impossible situations and yet be able to recognize problems which can be solved.

1. INCREASING COMMITMENT

As stated earlier, there is no substitute for will on the part of management, especially when upward mobility is the program objective. How to get it is another question. Clearly, if top management is definitely hostile from the first, further effort is futile. In the less clear-cut cases, the restructurer may be able to get commitment by doing a good job of selling both the usefulness of job restructuring as a method and the worthiness of upward mobility as a goal. Components of good salesmanship include—

a. *Benefits:* Potential benefits of job restructuring and of upward mobility should be fully elaborated and related to the needs of the organization and to the basic Federal commitment to improve and expand upward mobility.

b. *Frankness:* Although the benefits of the restructuring techniques are many, especially in the area of facilitating upward mobility, they should not be inflated, nor should false claims be made (such as immediate lowering of costs or instantly meeting the aspirations of all employees in dead end jobs). Giving the impression that job restructuring brings "manna from heaven" does no one any favors.

c. *Demonstrations:* Just as a picture is worth a thousand words, successful demonstrations of restructuring for upward mobility makes one of the strongest selling points. Further, managers who are hesitant may be won over by suggesting that the proposed restructuring project itself be done as a demonstration. If it works, then it can be made permanent and perhaps expanded; if not management will have lost little. Also, managers may find it advantageous to gain a reputation for being innovative and for meeting their responsibilities for improving upward mobility.

In addition to selling the manager on upward mobility the employees must also be sold. In this connection, management should realize the benefits of involving the exclusively recognized labor organization. The union can play an important, constructive, and beneficial role in selling the program to employees. Not only will this benefit the salability of the idea but it may also reduce or eliminate employee concerns that upward mobility is a threat to their incumbency. Of course, where changes in personnel policy and prac-

tices will affect the general working conditions of the employees represented by the union, management must provide the union with ample notice of the changes and consider the union's comments and proposals before making a change.

2. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Management and supervisory training or orientation can be provided to show that standards and other regulations need not be obstacles. Training agreements, the revision of existing standards or the development of new standards can avoid what seem to be at first glance inflexible barriers. Agency labor-management relations may play a significant part when planning for upward mobility through job restructuring. The exclusively recognized labor organization can provide beneficial input in decisions involving training and identifying career ladder programs. Although the decisions which management makes in achieving upward mobility generally are within management's reserved rights, it should be realized that the procedures utilized in selecting trainees and the procedures used in implementing the program fall into the area of matters which may be subject to bilateral determination with the union. Involving the union, as the representative of all employees in the recognized unit, should give the employees a feeling of participation and improve not only the operation of the program but also its credibility.

Job restructuring itself, both in the study stage and in the process of implementation, can improve and modernize management. It can do this directly by facilitating a more rational work organization and more efficient utilization of manpower. Indirectly, it encourages systematic planning and innovative management.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL OBSTACLES

The problem of dead end jobs at intermediate levels can also be handled through job restructuring by linking technician/subprofessional jobs to the higher level ladders to form full-range career ladders. Other obstacles require that other strategies be applied before any restructuring can be done. Where work units are hopelessly tiny, it may be possible to reorganize; small units could be combined into units large enough to support some bridge/technician positions if consolidation makes sense in terms of the work. Sometimes reorganization of units or redistribution of work, or both, can clear up the problem of low-level work at high grades. Where this is not possible, or where managers are reluctant to reorganize the unit or rearrange the work, the restructurer should consider whether the bridge job(s) may fit an existing series (e.g. management technician/auditor). If not, a new one can be developed (e.g. social science technician). Where program experience is absolutely indispensible to the principal occupations, other possibilities can include developing positions in administrative areas (budget, personnel, procurement, etc.) and setting up training plans that provide for program experience

in the field or outside the agency. The latter has been made far easier since the advent of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act.[1]

4. ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

The only way to get around most obstacles of this sort is through commitment from the top; that is, a clear knowledge on the part of all concerned that top management requires full cooperation. Demonstrations, whether they be drawn from another organization's experience or from the restructuring project itself, do provide a good tool for convincing people that upward mobility opportunities for employees who lack credentials or are minority group members will not lead to the imminent collapse of the organization.

Misconceptions can be dealt with simply by making sure that the purpose and the methodology of the project is clear to all concerned from the outset. This is most effective in written form for distribution. Job restructuring should be defined and differentiated from upward mobility and upgrading. The purpose of the project should be stated in such a way as not to reinforce feelings of job insecurity nor to generate great hopes for a staff increase. Bridge or technician positions should be defined clearly as not being clerical. Inevitably, some misconceptions will persist anyway. But, if the above is spelled out from the start, a great many misunderstandings will be avoided, and much time will be saved.

Further assistance in the application of job restructuring techniques to the development of upward mobility programs may be obtained by contacting:

Chief, Upward Mobility Section
Office of Federal Equal Employment Opportunity
U.S. Civil Service Commission
Washington, D.C. 20415
Telephone: (202) 632-2792

[1] For more information about the provisions of the act, contact the Office of the Director, Bureau of Intergovernmental Personnel Programs, U.S. Civil Service Commission, or the nearest CSC regional office.

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